

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 16, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General of the United States  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We are deeply concerned by allegations that former National Security Advisor Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn and individuals employed by Donald Trump's presidential campaign engaged in improper contact with Russian government and intelligence officials prior to the election and/or during the transition. A thorough investigation is needed into these potential security violations and the effects of foreign influence. However, given your role as a leading advisor to the Trump campaign who worked with many of those now possibly under investigation, we urge you to recuse yourself from this matter.

As you know, recently surfaced reports indicate that Gen. Flynn engaged in discussions with Russian government officials prior to January 20, 2017 that may have undermined U.S. national security, possibly violating federal law.<sup>1</sup> These reports are cause for serious concern, particularly given the National Security Advisor's unique and influential role in briefing and advising the president of the United States.

On Inauguration Day, the *New York Times* reported that, "American law enforcement and intelligence agencies are examining intercepted communications and financial transactions as part of a broad investigation into possible links between Russian officials and associates of President-elect Donald J. Trump, including his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort..."<sup>2</sup> This is corroborated by follow-up reporting that cites additional sources and expands upon details regarding the frequency and extent of contact between Trump campaign staff and Russian intelligence officials.<sup>3</sup> We have now come to learn that Gen. Flynn was interviewed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) about his conversations with the Russian government shortly after the inauguration,<sup>4</sup> and that these "intercepted communications" are what led to Gen. Flynn's resignation as National Security Advisor.

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Miller et al., "National security adviser Flynn discussed sanctions with Russian ambassador, despite denials, officials say," *The Washington Post*, February 9, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/national-security-adviser-flynn-discussed-sanctions-with-russian-ambassador-despite-denials-officials-say/2017/02/09/f85b29d6-ee11-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5\\_story.html?hpid=hp\\_hp-top-table-main\\_usrussia-%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm\\_term=.467a44891b7c](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/national-security-adviser-flynn-discussed-sanctions-with-russian-ambassador-despite-denials-officials-say/2017/02/09/f85b29d6-ee11-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_usrussia-%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.467a44891b7c)

<sup>2</sup> Michael S. Schmidt, et al., "Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates," *The New York Times*, January 19, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/us/politics/trump-russia-associates-investigation.html>

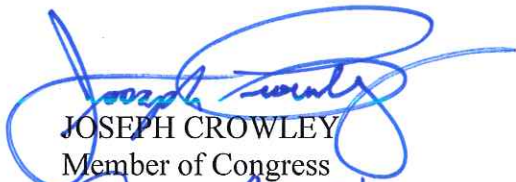
<sup>3</sup> Michael S. Schmidt, et al., "Trump Campaign Aides Had Repeated Contacts With Russian Intelligence," *The New York Times*, February 14, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/14/us/politics/russia-intelligence-communications-trump.html>

<sup>4</sup> Devlin Barrett and Carol E. Lee, "Mike Flynn Was Probed by FBI Over Calls With Russian Official," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 15, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mike-flynn-was-probed-by-fbi-over-calls-with-russian-official-1487123221>

Anyone serving as attorney general has broad discretion over the scope and conduct of investigations as well as final say over whether to bring federal charges against individuals. However, you have worked alongside many of those who are or will be investigated. For example, an April 2016 article by *New York Magazine* described in detail your close involvement with the president and his campaign, citing one source that said, “When Jeff Sessions calls, Trump listens.”<sup>5</sup> There are also indications that you have a longstanding personal relationship with Paul Manafort,<sup>6</sup> a former chairman of the campaign you vocally supported and one of the individuals reportedly under investigation by your department. And, on an episode of CNN’s *State of the Union*, you described then-candidate Donald Trump’s financial ties to Russia as, “Not a big issue for America today.”<sup>7</sup>

The revelations of the past few days regarding contact between high-level Trump Administration officials and Russian intelligence operatives have been a blow to public confidence in our institutions and to the integrity of our national security. These allegations must be met with a thorough, complete and impartial examination. Given your relationships with those who will be under investigation, we urge you to recuse yourself going forward.

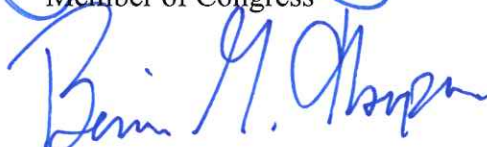
Sincerely,



JOSEPH CROWLEY  
Member of Congress



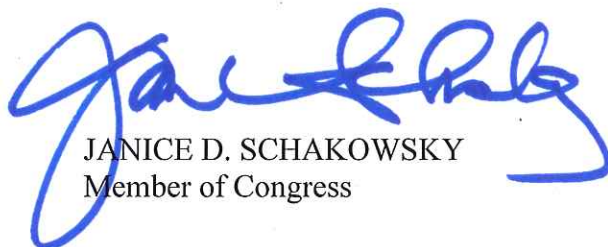
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Member of Congress



JAMIE RASKIN  
Member of Congress

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Sherman, “Operation Trump: Inside the most unorthodox campaign in political history,” *New York Magazine*, April 3, 2016, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/04/inside-the-donald-trump-presidential-campaign.html>

<sup>6</sup> Robert Kolker, “Paul Manafort Is Back,” *BloombergBusinessweek*, November 28, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-11-28/paul-manafort-is-back>

<sup>7</sup> Sessions, Jeff. Interview by Jim Acosta. *State of the Union*. CNN. July 31, 2016. Television.

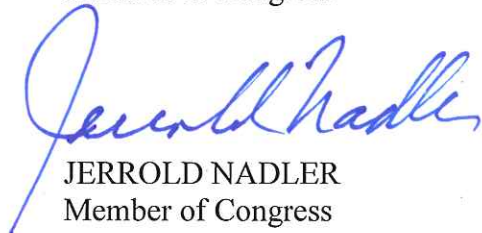




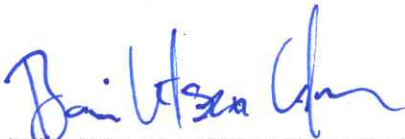
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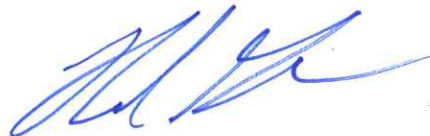
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VICENTE GONZALEZ  
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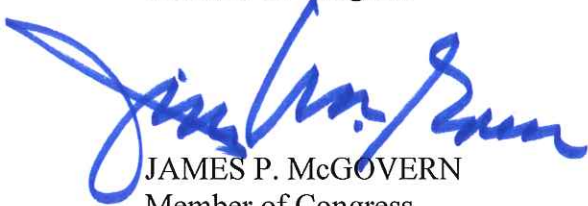
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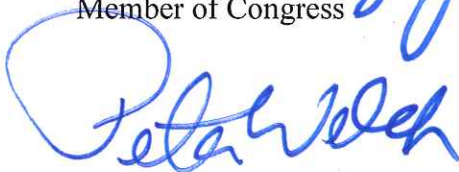
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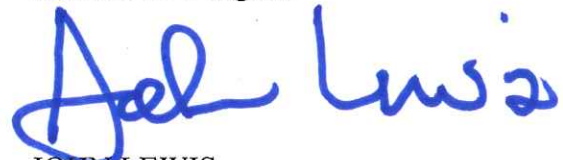
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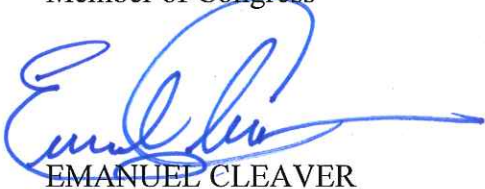
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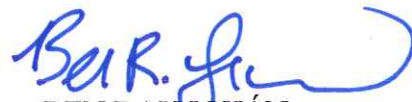
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BEN RAY LUJÁN  
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CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress



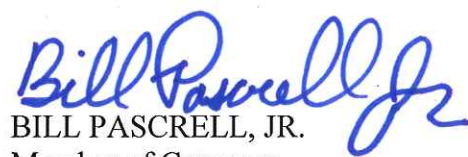
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TOM O'HALLERAN  
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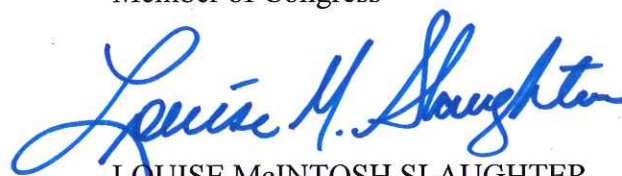
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